

ANGELIC AGENCY

Chapter 10

The last great prophecy, or revelation, made known to Daniel is set before us in detail in chapters 10 to 12. It is the most minute of all the prophecies given in the book. It commences with Daniel's day, and culminates in the ushering in of the kingdom.

It is of importance to notice that here, as elsewhere in the prophetic Scriptures, it is distinctively Daniel's people who are in view. (See verse 14.) We shall find nothing here, nor, for that matter, elsewhere in the Old Testament, about the Church of the present dispensation.

It is because of lack of intelligence as to this that so much confusion has come in in the interpretation of prophecy.

We see from the opening verse of the book of Ezra, and from verse 1 of our chapter, that two years had elapsed between the time that king Cyrus gave permission to the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and the time that Daniel had this vision. He himself was not one of those who returned; doubtless from the fact that he was in a position requiring his attendance upon the king, and was also a very aged man, probably about ninety years old. We see him waiting quietly for the time when he is to leave the world behind, in which he has seen so many changes and upheavals; but his heart is exercised about the remnant of his nation who have gone up to the place of Jehovah's name; and you find him in deep grief, deep sorrow of heart, that sorrow of heart which perhaps only those know who, as Daniel, enter into the true state of the people of God. Even those who had gone up to Jerusalem failed from the very beginning in carrying out the mind of God in its fulness. They went up with a measure of enthusiasm, and were gathered back to their holy city in ruin; but alas, slothfulness and indifference to God's glory soon began to eat like a canker among them, and alliances were formed with the strangers surrounding Jerusalem, so that God really got very little out of their returning to the place of His temple and altar.

No doubt Daniel knew and felt all this; and his heart was grieved over it. He knew too that those who went up were very few indeed, in comparison with those who remained at ease in the land where their bondage had given place to indifferent toleration. While they, as we see them in the book of Esther, seem quite content with the measure of liberty they enjoy, and have apparently no heart for that which had so large a place in the Blind of Daniel, he is found bowed before God in deep grief, mourning three full weeks. (And here I would have you notice the marginal reading, " weeks of *days*/" bearing out that to which I called your attention in the last lecture, in regard to the use of the word " week.") During this time of his mourning, he tasted no pleasant bread, nor flesh, nor wine, neither anointing himself at all, till the three whole weeks were fulfilled.

At the end of that time, as he was by the great river Hiddekel, in looking up, he saw a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold. His body is described as being like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire. His arms and his feet were like polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. The

description cannot but recall to our minds that of the glorified Lord Himself as given in the first chapter of Revelation. But that this messenger who appeared to Daniel was not really a theophany, but a created angel, seems evident from the fact that he required the help of Michael in his conflict. When Daniel beheld him, the men who were with him fled to hide themselves, though they saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them. Left alone in the presence of this majestic being, the prophet's strength was turned into weakness, and his vigor into corruption, so that he was upon the ground as one in a deep sleep, yet hearing the voice of the angel. A hand was stretched forth which touched him and set him upon his knees, though he was still obliged to support himself with the palms of his hands. Then the messenger spoke, saying, "O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent." At this the prophet stood up trembling.

The angel then said, "Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thy heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. "We get a remarkable insight here into the unseen world, and the conflict even now being carried on in heavenly places. And may we not find here also the reason why many of our prayers do not seem to be answered when and as we would desire to have them? For three whole weeks Daniel had been before God in earnest supplication: he prayed, he besought, he interceded, on behalf of his people; yet no answer had come; and had Daniel ceased praying, he might have given up the object of his prayers, and declared that God turned a deaf ear to his petitions. But the angel tells him that at the very beginning of his supplication the commandment went forth, and he was sent from the very throne of God to make known to Daniel that which would set his mind at rest in regard to God's purpose and the final blessing of His people. But for twenty-one days this angel had been fighting his way through the fiends of the upper air. The prince of the kingdom of Persia (not Cyrus himself, but an evil angel evidently, delegated by Satan to seek to influence the hearts of the Persian kings against the people of God) had withstood this holy angel of the Lord for one and twenty days. Nor could the divinely sent messenger prevail until Michael, here called "one of the chief princes," and in the New Testament "the archangel," came to help him.

Now I grant you that all this is very mysterious. It is something altogether outside of the sphere of human cognizance. We know nothing whatever about the conflicts continuously being carried on in the unseen world, save what we can learn from our Bibles. But this much is clear: Here was a man who was praying earnestly on earth, and God had heard that prayer in heaven. In answer to it He sent an angel; but for three weeks there was some hindrance keeping that angel from reaching Daniel. That hindrance was in the unseen world, and by such a power that the archangel himself was needed to overcome it.

Now I would like to bring a few other scriptures to your attention that have to do with this solemn subject. In the first chapters of the book of Job we find the sons of God presenting themselves before the Lord, and we are told that Satan came also. The sons of God are clearly an order of angelic ministers, engaged in carrying out the will of God in connection with this world, in accordance with the word, "He maketh His angels' spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them that shall be heirs of salvation?" Among these sons of God, Satan, the foul leader of the evil hosts, walks unabashed.

He acts, shall I say? as one who has no fear of rebuke in that company. He is there, as on other occasions in Scripture, as the great adversary and accuser of the brethren. He accuses Job to the very face of God; and, as in the case of the apostle Peter and the other disciples, he seems to demand them that he may sift them as wheat. And the Lord does not deny his demand, but delivers Job into his hands, for Job's own good, as we know. So, we gather from this scripture that God is able to use even the devil to carry out His own purposes for the blessing of His children. He has not been outwitted by Satan, but uses him all through this present time. The devil is the sifter of God's wheat. The Lord wants His wheat sifted; He does not want a lot of chaff. But when the devil is thus used to sift God's wheat, when His children are thus put into the devil's sieve, not one grain of the wheat is lost; the devil is simply used by God for the separation of the chaff from the wheat; that is all. Do not despair then if, like Job and like Peter, you are put into the devil's sieve. It is God Himself who is letting you be sifted like that, because He has seen the chaff in your life, and He wants the real to be separated from the false. But the point I had in mind in directing your attention to this scripture was that all might see that good and evil angels alike have direct access to the presence of God.

In the eighteenth chapter of the book of 2 Chronicles we have the account of an alliance entered into by Ahab and Jehoshaphat. Ahab was a wicked king, the ruler of the ten tribes. Jehoshaphat was in large measure a man of God; but unhappily he was a man who could not say "No." He was of too yielding a character for his own good and the good of the kingdom of Judah over which he ruled. At Ahab's request he had promised to go out to battle to help him against his enemies, but he desired also to consult a prophet of the Lord. Ahab brought in a host of the prophets of Baal, who all predicted a glorious victory. But this did not satisfy Jehoshaphat; and so, Micaiah, a prophet of Jehovah imprisoned for his faithfulness, is brought from his dungeon to declare the mind of the Lord. When he came, the king of Israel said, "Shall we go to battle?" And Micaiah replied, ironically, oh yes, "Go ye up, and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand." But the king detected the tone of irony in his voice, and Ahab adjured him to tell him the truth. At that Micaiah drew aside, as it were, the veil from the other world, and declared that he had seen a multitude of spirits surrounding the throne of God. One of these, in obedience to the divine permission, had been sent forth to become a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets, that he might seduce the wretched idolatrous king to his destruction. Here again we see the same thing that is brought before us in the book of Job, angels, both good and evil, having access to heaven.

It is the same in the third chapter of Zechariah. What a beautiful picture we have there! Joshua, the high priest, is the representative of the whole nation of Israel: he stands before the Lord clothed in filthy garments, a picture of one chosen of God and yet denied by sin. An adversary is there to accuse him, but the angel of Jehovah is standing by. Who is that mystic angel of Jehovah? Who but He of whom Jehovah said, "My name is in Him"? He speaks to us of the Lord Jesus Himself, the Messenger of the covenant. What does Jehovah say when Satan attempts to accuse? "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan! is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" This brings out two things: first, there is God's sovereign electing grace; and then, there is redemption. That is why God could recognize and own the remnant of Israel in spite of their failures. Jehovah says, "I have chosen him", that is His answer to Satan. For "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." But this is based upon redemption, for He says unto those who stood by, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And unto him He said, "Behold, I have caused thine

iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." The presence of the Angel of the covenant points on to the *cross*; for it was at that cross the covenant would be ratified in His precious blood who became Man with the view to the suffering of death, that He might cleanse from all iniquity those whom He redeemed to Himself. Thus, we have full redemption, and the brand plucked out of the fire.

Now let us link up with this that important passage in the twelfth chapter of Revelation. Remember that it speaks of something that is still future. "There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast out, which accused them before our God Day and night" (vers. 7-10). This gives us the end of Satan's place as the accuser with access to the heavens. He is driven forth by that same Michael who came to the assistance of the angel who speaks to Daniel in our chapter. This event will take place in the midst of the seventieth week of the ninth chapter; and after that no foul spirit, will ever more have access to the presence of God.

In the sixth chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians there is a passage of great importance. See verse 11: "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against wicked spirits in heavenly places" (literal translation). The Christian's foes are these wicked spirits, who, like the prince of the kingdom of Persia, are ruling the hearts of men in these days of darkness. Against their wiles we are warned. The great business of Satan at the present time is to seek to deceive the people of God with things that seem to be in accordance with His mind, but which are really deceitful imitations.

You remember, when Joshua and the people of Israel entered the land of Canaan, God told them to utterly destroy all the nations that dwelt in it. But the Gibeonites, filled with terror, sent an ambassage to Joshua, pretending to have come from a long distance; and by means of their moldy bread, ragged clothes and worn shoes, deceived the leaders of Israel into entering into a league with them. Thus, they were misled by not being on their guard against the wiles of the Canaanites. And we too will be deceived by the hellish stratagems of our great adversary if we be not careful to continuously ask counsel of the Lord. In this sixth chapter of Ephesians, we are told that our warfare is with "the world-rulers of this darkness." Who are these world-rulers? They are not the king of England, the emperor of Germany, the czar of Russia, or the president of this great republic these great and often good men have to do with the temporal government of this world, they are "the powers that be," ordained of God, yet they may be like the little figures on the chessboard, in the hands of the *real* world-rulers of this darkness.

This is what we learn in this tenth chapter of Daniel, the prince of the kingdom of Persia who withstood the angel of the Lord one-and twenty days was one of the world-rulers of this darkness. The prince of Grecia of verse 20 was another one seeking to influence the hearts of the Grecian rulers against the will of God. And then, on the other hand, have you noticed what Michael is called in the last verse? He is designated as "Michael *your* prince"; and in chapter

12:1 he is called " the great prince which standeth for the children of *thy* people"; that is, Michael the archangel seems in a special manner to have a care for the people of Israel.

Thus, while evil angels were seeking Israel's ruin, Michael and his hosts of benevolent angels were protecting their interests.

You will remember how efforts were being made at this very time to thwart God's purposes concerning the Jews. Sanballat and his companions sought in every way they could to hinder the progress of the work of the Lord at Jerusalem. What was going on upon the earth was evidently intimately connected with, in fact the result of, what was going on in the upper air. Satan is called the prince of the power of the air; and his angelic subordinates and God's holy angels were warring in connection with the attempt to carry out that which God Himself had planned for His earthly people.

Perhaps the chief of all the world-rulers of this darkness is described in the twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel, verses 11 to 18. You will notice that in the first ten verses of the chapter the prince of Tyre is spoken of; but from the 11th verse on we have a very different being, one who is clearly superhuman, designated as the king of Tyre. Of him Ezekiel says, " Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, (he sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise, they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore, I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thy heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee."

Was all this true of any earthly king of Tyre? Surely not. But it was true of the great prince, the unseen ruler, who was leading on the kingdom of Tyre to its doom. Alas, how readily do rulers and nations obey the behests of these malignant spirits, who, having lost heaven for themselves, now seem to find their delight in encompassing the ruin of mankind! And though God in His grace is seeking man's blessing, and has given His Word and Spirit to guide in paths of righteousness and peace, as well as having sent forth hosts of unfallen elect angels to influence leaders and led to prefer justice and holiness to unrighteousness and iniquity, yet so perverse is the heart of man that in his natural state he is ever ready to be led by the devil captive at his will.

In the present age our conflict as Christians is said to be with *principalities* and *powers* who are not of flesh and blood. This makes it evident that there are degrees in rank among angels, whether fallen or unfallen, as there are in human armies. The special effort of these organized hosts of hell is now to deceive the people of God by presenting something else for their hearts to take the place of Christ and His truth, and thus keep them out of their blessing. Coupled with this is the effort to hinder exercised souls from coming to the knowledge of the truth at all by

imitating that which is of God, that those may be turned aside into the devious mazes of error who would otherwise seem about to obey the truth.

Have you noticed how every precious truth of Scripture has its Satanic counterfeit? It has been so from the very beginning. Scarcely was the glorious gospel of grace proclaimed when the devil introduced men secretly among the assemblies of God, whose object was to turn that very grace into lasciviousness. If the apostle taught that the Christian, was not under law, but grace. then the antinomian was almost at his heels to cry, "Let us do evil, that good may come." And it is the same in our day. Let the precious truth of the indwelling and gifts of the Holy Spirit be declared, and Satan will follow with false gifts and another spirit, leading even earnest souls into the wildest fanaticism. Let the truth of new birth be insisted upon, and the devil will raise up teachers after his own heart to tell men that being born again means simply " rising out of the self-life into the spiritual, reaching out after the higher ideals, seeking to make that which is highest, noblest and best of ourselves; thus, saving ourselves by character. This is a sample of the teaching heard in many a supposedly orthodox pulpit at the present time.

Again, let one begin to preach that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again; let him put forth the blessed truth of the rapture of the Church at the Lord's return; and you will have the wicked spirits in heavenly places poisoning men's minds with so many unscriptural and false conceptions about this solemn and important theme, that the second advent becomes a byword in the minds of some intelligent people and they become sick and tired of the whole thing. But these are just the wiles of the devil against which the believer is warned, and concerning which we need to be on our guard, remembering the word, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

Thank God, the hosts of the upper air are not all malevolent. You remember at the siege of Dothan, in answer to the prayer of Elisha, the Lord opened the eyes of the prophet's servant, and he saw the mountains round about full of fiery chariots. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about those that fear Him." O beloved, we too need opened eyes! Then we would see the angelic host camping around us for our protection, and watching over us for good. Thus, we would fight on with new courage, clad in the whole armour of God, knowing that against Christ's Church, founded upon Himself, the gates of hell shall not prevail.

And now, in closing this solemn subject, let me say a word to the unsaved. These wicked spirits of which I have been speaking are determined upon your soul's damnation. They will use every effort known to friends to hinder your salvation and to seal your doom. How much then you need to learn the lesson that in yourself you have no strength or power; you are but a poor, weak, easily-deceived soul led by Satan and imposed upon by his wicked hosts. One alone can deliver you from your dreadful foes; that One is the blessed Lord Jesus Christ who died upon the cross " that through death He might destroy (render powerless, or annul) him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. "Call then upon Him, and be delivered from the fearful and superhuman enemies who desire your eternal ruin, for it is "written that " Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Let us now, after this long parenthesis, turn back to our chapter. In the 14th verse the angel

tells Daniel that he had come to make him understand what should befall the prophet's people, the Jews, in the latter days. At this Daniel set his face toward the ground and became dumb. Another angel then drew near and touched his lips, at which he spoke aloud and said unto the glorious being who stood before him, " O my lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? For as for me, straightway there remaineth no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me." The ministering angel touched him again, strengthening him and bidding him fear not but be strong. At this Daniel bade the revealing angel speak on. He tells him that he must return to fight with the prince of Persia, and that when he has gone forth, the prince of Grecia shall come. But first he is commissioned to show Daniel " that which is noted in the Scripture of truth." This is clearly a record kept, not on earth, but in heaven; the omniscient God having outlined, long before it comes to pass on earth, the events to occur in the kingdoms of men. This revelation is given as in the next chapter.

As "in the roll of the book" it was written of the eternal Son of God, " I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within My heart"; and just as every step of His journey from the throne of the universe down to the cross of Calvary, and back to the throne, yea, on to the ages of ages, was foreknown from before the foundation of the world, so has God foreseen all that is to transpire upon this planet in the affairs of men. In the " Scripture of truth " recorded above, all is ever before His eyes: let Satan and evil men rage as they will, He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will,"

The Christian heart may surely rest in this; rejoicing in this knowledge, that, at all times, "God sits as sovereign on His throne, and ruleth all things well!"